



National Guard Youth ChalleNGe: Making a Difference in the Lives of Young Arkansans

Earlier this year, I visited North Little Rock's Camp Robinson to highlight the [Arkansas National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program](#)'s positive impact on the lives of Arkansas teens.

Each year, up to 160 teens benefit from Arkansas's Youth ChalleNGe Program, an initiative that helps at-risk youth become more productive, employed, law-abiding citizens. Since its inception, more than 85,000 young men and women have graduated from the program nationwide and have received their high school degree. Nearly 80 percent have gone to college, earned productive jobs, or joined the military.

Currently, the federal government pays for 60 percent of a state's Youth ChalleNGe operating costs, with states covering the remaining 40 percent. The current cap on funding has restricted many states from establishing additional programs or building on existing programs.

That's why, earlier this year, I introduced [legislation](#) to allow the Youth ChalleNGe Program to expand to new sites and make a difference in the lives of even more young people across the nation. My bill would allow the federal government to fund new programs at 100 percent for the first two years. For existing programs, it would change the federal government's cost-share ratio from 60 to 75 percent, decreasing the cost for states to 25 percent.

Last week, I introduced my proposal as an amendment to the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, annual legislation that authorizes military priorities. Today, I am proud to announce that [the Senate has passed](#), by a vote of 87-7, the bipartisan defense bill with my amendment.

I am proud to have the support of the National Guard Youth Foundation, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, and the National Guard Association of the United States. Throughout my career in the United States Senate, I have fought to ensure our nation's military service members, veterans, and their families receive the benefits and care they have earned and certainly deserve, and I will continue to work on their behalf.

With Arkansas Pride,

[Watch Senator Lincoln's floor speech on the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe.](#)



Senator Lincoln's

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